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Letter dated 16 April 2007 from the Permanent Representative of Uzbekistan to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

I have the honour to convey to you the information regarding the development of civil society institutions in Uzbekistan (see annex).

I would appreciate it if you could circulate the present letter and its annex as a document of the sixty-first session of the General Assembly, under agenda item 67.

(*Signed*) Alisher **Vohidov**
Permanent Representative of the Republic of Uzbekistan

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Annex to the letter dated 16 April 2007 from the Permanent Representative of Uzbekistan to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

[Original: Russian]

Development of non-governmental organizations in the Republic of Uzbekistan

For over ten years, the Republic of Uzbekistan has been experiencing a process of active development of non-governmental organizations (NGOs).

The Government of Uzbekistan is paying special attention to the enactment of favourable legislative provisions designed to support civil society and the development of NGOs.

Accordingly, the Committee on Democratic Institutions, Non-governmental Organizations and Local Government Agencies of the Legislative Chamber of the Parliament of the Republic of Uzbekistan has been monitoring and conducting an analytical assessment of compliance by the Republic's judicial organs with article 22, paragraph 1, of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, which states that "Everyone shall have the right to freedom of association with others, including the right to form and join trade unions for the protection of his interests".

This work showed that Uzbekistan ratified the International Covenant in 1995 and, since its accession to the Covenant, has submitted two periodic reports to the United Nations Human Rights Committee, which were considered. Following the consideration of the reports, national action plans were formulated, which are being consistently implemented.

The provisions of article 22 of the International Covenant are fully reflected in the Constitution of the Republic of Uzbekistan and in particular in article 34, which states that citizens have the right to form trade unions, political parties and other social groupings and to take part in mass movements.

The machinery for the exercise of this constitutional right of citizens is described in the laws of the Republic of Uzbekistan on social organizations (1991), on trade union groupings, their rights and protection of their activity (1992), on political parties (1996), on religious organizations and freedom of conscience (1998), on non-governmental non-profit organizations (1999), on local government agencies (1999), on social funds (2003), on the financing of political parties (2004), on elections of chairpersons of citizens' meetings and their advisers (2004), on the Trade and Industry Chamber of the Republic of Uzbekistan (2004), on partnerships of private housing owners (2006) and on protection of the activity of non-governmental non-profit organizations (2006).

In accordance with the legislation in force, the Rules on the consideration of applications for registration of the charters of social groupings active in the territory of the Republic of Uzbekistan and the Regulations on the procedure for State registration and reregistration of branches and offices of foreign NGOs in the territory of the Republic of Uzbekistan, confirmed by Resolutions of the Cabinet of Ministers of the Republic of Uzbekistan of 12 March 1993 and 11 December 2003, respectively, and other regulatory instruments, the judicial organs of the Republic

are responsible for the registration of local and foreign NGOs and for monitoring their activity in accordance with their constituent instruments.

There are currently about 5,000 non-governmental non-profit organizations in Uzbekistan, including foreign ones. They have quite a broad range of activities. In addition to providing social services, NGOs are also active in such areas as culture and sports, women's and children's issues, science and education, health care, human rights, youth, environmental issues and the media.

The establishment in 2005 of the Uzbekistan Association of Non-governmental Non-profit Organizations was an important step in the further development of NGOs. This Association currently comprises over 200 different national NGOs.

In addition, with the aim of creating civic institutions that are independent, stable and supported by different strata of the population, enhancing their role in the solution of socially significant problems and increasing the public, political, social and business activity of citizens, a Fund was set up in 2005 to support non-governmental non-profit organizations in Uzbekistan.

It is noteworthy that most NGOs in the Republic currently specialize in the provision of social assistance (Solgom Avlod Uchun (For a Healthy Generation), Ekosan (Ecology and Health), Sen Elgiz Emassan (You Are Not Alone), Mekhr Nuri (Charitable Fund), Uzbekistan Trade Union Federation, etc.).

A growing number of national NGOs are also actively participating in the process of the adoption of decisions and laws in the country's Parliament.

Branches and offices of over 50 foreign NGOs are also doing useful work in Uzbekistan, most of them in the social area. Mention may be made inter alia of the Konrad Adenauer Fund (Germany), Operation Mercy (Sweden), Global SourceNet (United Kingdom), Mercy Corps (United States) and the Harvest Korea Incorporated Association (South Korea).